

Class Notes Adaptation of
Magruder's American Government, 2005 Edition

Chapter 2, Section 2

The Coming of Independence

1. When did 13 British Colonies in North America declare their secession (withdrawal) from Great Britain?

Thirteen colonies declared their independence from Great Britain in July 1776. The secession document, *The Declaration of Independence*, was dated **July 4, 1776**.

Yes, memorize that date.

2. For most of the colonial period in the 1700s, Britain's North American colonies had been given a great deal of what?

Freedom to govern themselves largely as they saw fit. This hands-off British policy became known as “benign neglect.”

3. Practically speaking, the relationship between Great Britain and her North American colonies was of what governmental structure by the mid-1700s?

Federal

Keep in mind it was not a formal federal system, but because of the great distance between Great Britain and her North American colonies, a practical federal system had evolved into being.

On a practical level, the central government in Great Britain had its sphere of influence over her American colonies while the colonies themselves exercised great self-governing power within their respective borders.

4. In terms of governing the North American colonies, what responsibilities did the British government exercise?

The British government assumed responsibility of defending the colonies. The British government also regulated colonial trade to a modest degree.

5. What changed the relationship between Great Britain and her North American colonies, in terms of the Britain exercising greater control over her colonies?

The Seven Years' War (aka, The French and Indian War). The Seven Years' War was something of a world war embroiling the major European powers.

The sides to the war were complex, but you need to know for this class that it was a **Great Britain vs. France** conflict

6. Who won the Seven Years' War?

Great Britain

7. What treaty ended the Seven Years' War?

The Treaty of Paris of 1763

8. What did France lose and the British and Spanish gain from the Treaty of Paris of 1763?

France lost Canada to the British. France also lost to Britain a great deal of land from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River. The French had to give New Orleans over to the Spanish.

The French also lost their territory on the northern Gulf Coast. The French city of Mobile was handed over to the British. Fort Conde was renamed Fort Charlotte.

Spain continued to control lands west of the Mississippi River

9. If the Seven Years' War was such a great victory for Great Britain, then how did it lead to conflict with her American colonies?

The Seven Years' War was an expensive victory for the British, and Parliament wanted the colonies to help pay down the war debt. Also, the British acquired Canada, and they wanted to treat the Catholic population cautiously. The British also now controlled a great deal of territory from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River. In those lands were a great deal of Native Americans who might come into conflict with colonials seeking new lands.

These issues would help trigger conflict and ultimately a revolt against British authority in her American colonies.

10. In the wake of the Seven Years' War, did the American colonials still consider themselves to be loyal British subjects?

Yes they did.

11. What were three British policies, after the Seven Years' War, that triggered conflict between the British and her colonies?

In order to raise money to pay the war debt, the British Parliament enacted the **1765 Stamp Act**, a form of direct taxation on colonies. Many in the colonies resented this.

The Proclamation of 1763 forbade British colonials from settling in most areas west of the Appalachian Mountains.

The British extended a great deal of religious tolerance to French Canadians who were Catholics. It's not something we talk about much in this country, but anti-Catholicism was commonplace in colonies, and subsequently in the United States until a few decades ago.

12. From 1765 to 1774, what happened to the relationship between Great Britain and her North American colonies?

The relationship deteriorated. Increasingly, many colonials saw the British government as unfair and even repressive.

13. What was the First Continental Congress?

A meeting of colonial representatives from various North American colonies. The First Continental Congress first met in September 1774. The purpose of the congress was to find ways to protest British policies and seek solutions.

14. What happened on April 19, 1775?

Fighting broke out between colonial militiamen and British troops at Lexington, Massachusetts and Concord, Massachusetts.

15. What was the Second Continental Congress?

An assembly of colonial representatives who first met in May 1775. The Second Continental Congress was the institution that declared colonial independence from Great Britain.

Basically, the Second Continental Congress ruled a union of American states (formerly colonies) from July 1776 until March 1, 1781 when the *Articles of Confederation* went into effect.

16. From 1776 to 1781, what did the Second Continental Congress accomplish?

It declared independence for 13 colonies. It established an army that fought the British. It established an alliance with the French government. It served as the central institution of government uniting the 13 states during the American Revolution.

17. When did the major fighting come to an end in the American Revolution?

In October 1781 the Americans and French defeated the British at Yorktown, Virginia.